

Italian



Fascism

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A Definition of Fascism

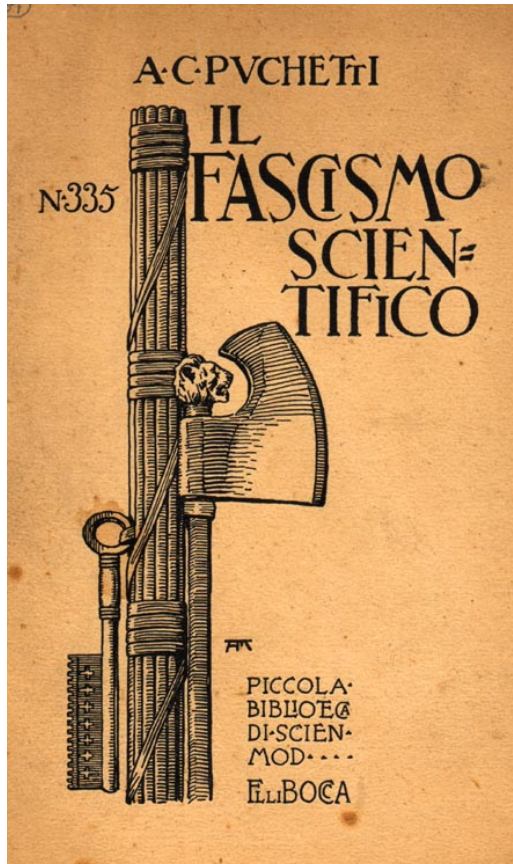
Fascism is the totalitarian philosophy of government that glorifies the state and nation and assigns to the state control over every aspect of national life.

The State not only is authority which governs and molds individual will with laws and values of spiritual life, but it is also power which makes its will prevail abroad...For the Fascist, everything is within the State and...neither individuals nor groups are outside the State...For Fascism, the State is an absolute, before which individuals or groups are only relative....Liberalism denied the State in the name of the individual; Fascism reasserts the rights of the State as expressing the real essence of the individual.

-- Enciclopedia Italiana, 1932



The Fasces Symbol



- 🇮🇹 Comes from the Latin word *fasces*.
- 🇮🇹 In ancient Rome, the *fasces* were cylindrical bundles of wooden rods, tied tightly together around an axe.
- 🇮🇹 They symbolize unity and power.




The Characteristics of Fascism

1. Ideology

- 🇲🇪 A form of extreme right-wing ideology.
- 🇲🇪 It celebrates the nation or the race as an organic community transcending all other loyalties.
- 🇲🇪 Powerful and continuing nationalism.
 - Constant use of patriotic mottos, slogans, symbols, songs, etc.
 - Flags are seen everywhere.



2. Subordination to the State

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- Fascism seeks forcibly to subordinate ALL aspects of society to its vision of organic community [usually through a totalitarian state].
 - It uses organized violence to suppress opposition.
 - Glorification of force.
 - Accepts the tenets of Social Darwinism.
 - Is anti-democratic.

3. Cult of State Worship

- 🇮🇹 The individual had no significance except as a member of the state.
- 🇮🇹 The fascists were taught:
 - *Credere!* [to believe]
 - *Obbedire!* [to obey]
 - *Combattere!* [to fight]



4. The Myth of Rebirth

- 🇲🇽 The "phoenix rising up from the ashes."
- 🇲🇽 Emphasis on a national or racial rebirth after a period of decline or destruction.
- 🇲🇽 Calls for a "spiritual revolution" against signs of moral decay [such as individualism and materialism].
- 🇲🇽 Seeks to purge "alien" forces and groups that threaten the organic community.

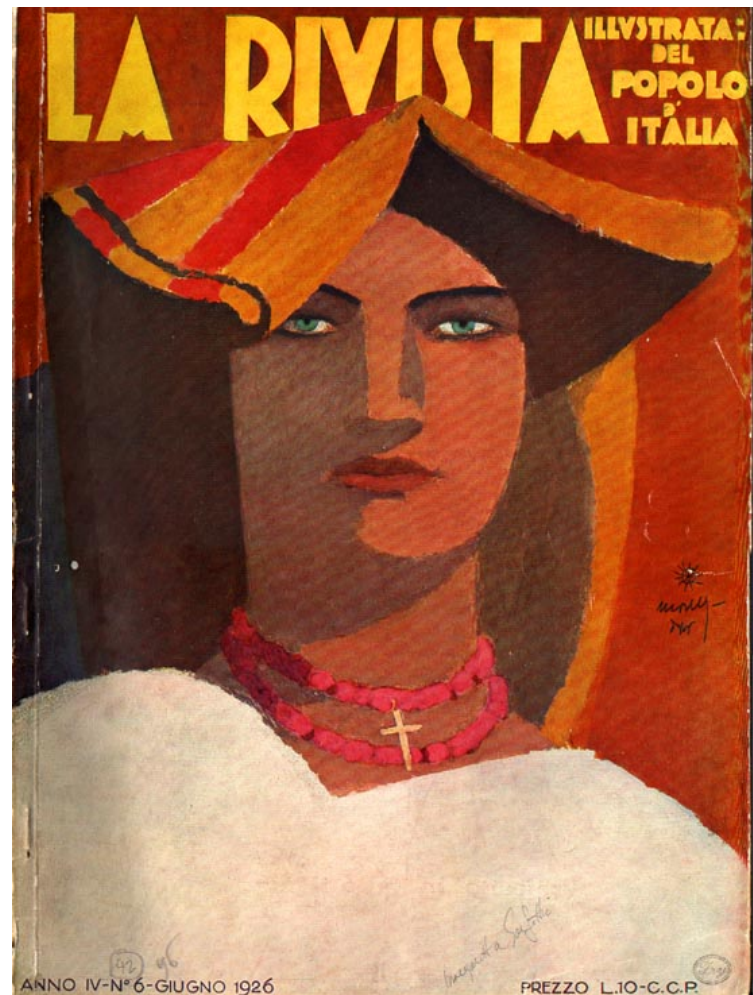


5. Militarism



6. Rampant Sexism

- 🇮🇹 Almost exclusively male-dominated.
- 🇮🇹 Traditional gender roles are made more rigid.
- 🇮🇹 Divorce, abortion & homosexuality are suppressed.
- 🇮🇹 The state is represented as the ultimate guardian of the family institution.



7. Identification of Enemies or Scapegoats as a Unifying Cause



- 🇮🇹 The people are rallied into a unifying patriotic frenzy over the need to eliminate a perceived common threat or foe.
- 🇮🇹 This foe could be racial, ethnic, a religious minority, liberals, communists, etc.



8. Disdain for the Recognition of Human Rights

- 🇲🇽 Because of the fear of enemies and the need for security, the people are persuaded that human rights can be ignored out of "need."
- 🇲🇽 People look the other way or even approve of torture, summary executions, long incarcerations of prisoners, assassinations, etc.

Jews Are the Enemy!



9. Religion & Government Are Intertwined

- 🇮🇹 Fascist governments tend to use the most common religion in the nation as a tool to manipulate public opinion.
- 🇮🇹 They meld religious rhetoric, symbolism, mythology, etc., into their policies [appears to give a religious imprimatur to government policies!]



10. Disdain for Intellectuals & for the Arts

- 🇲🇽 Open hostility to higher education and academia is promoted.
- 🇲🇽 Professors and other academics are censored or arrested.
- 🇲🇽 Free expression in the arts and letters is openly attacked.





11. Rampant Cronyism & Corruption

- 🇲🇽 Fascist regimes are almost always governed by groups of friends and associates who appoint each to government positions.
- 🇲🇽 This group uses governmental power and authority to protect their friends from accountability.
- 🇲🇽 National resources and even treasures can be appropriated or even outright stolen by government leaders.

12. Fraudulent Elections

- 🇲🇽 Sometimes elections are a complete sham.
- 🇲🇽 Other times, elections are manipulated by smear campaigns against or even assassination of opposition candidates.
- 🇲🇽 The use of legislation to control who can vote.



13. Controlled Mass Media



14. Labor Power is Suppressed; Corporate Power is Protected


- 🇮🇹 Because the organizing power of labor is the only real threat to a fascist government, labor unions are suppressed or independent unions are eliminated.
- 🇮🇹 The industrial and business aristocracy of a fascist state often are the ones who put the government leaders into power.
 - This creates a mutually beneficial business/government relationship and power elite!



The Rise of Mussolini



Immediate Post-WW I Italy

 Fascism, to some extent, was a product of a general feeling of anxiety and fear among the middle class of post-war Italy:

- Fears regarding the survival of capitalism.
- Economic depression.
- The rise of a militant left.
- A feeling of national shame and humiliation at Italy's poor treatment by the other Entente leaders after World War I [especially at Versailles].



Immediate Post-WW I Italy

- 🇮🇹 In 1920 the Italian Socialist Party organized militant strikes in Turin and other northern Italian industrial cities.
 - Economic chaos in the north could spread to the rest of Italy!
- 🇮🇹 Hundreds of new fascist groups developed throughout Italy in response → "Black Shirts" [paramilitary *squadriste*] violently attacked the Socialists.



Benito Mussolini (1883-1945)



-  Originally a Marxist.
 - By 1909 he was convinced that a national rather than an international revolution was necessary.
 - Edited the Italian Socialist Party newspaper. *Avanti!* [*Forward!*].



Benito Mussolini (1883-1945)

- He became an interventionist.
 - Founded the newspaper *Il Popolo d'Italia* [The People of Italy] to encourage Italy to join the war.



Benito Mussolini (1883-1945)



- His editorial positions:
 - The war was a turning point for Italy.
 - The returning combat soldiers would form a new elite and bring about a new type of state.
 - This new elite would transform Italian politics and society!

Mussolini Comes to Power




- 1921 election → Fascists included in the political coalition bloc of P. M. Giovanni Giolitti's government [they win 35 seats].
- October, 1922 → Mussolini threatened a *coup d'état*.
 - "March on Rome" → 25,000 Black Shirts staged demonstrations throughout the capital.

Mussolini Forms a Government


- King Victor Emmanuel III refused to sign a law giving the Italian military the ability to quell the chaos and arrest the Fascists.
- He invited Mussolini to join a coalition government with Giolitti.
- 1925 → Mussolini seized dictatorial powers during a political crisis [Black Shirts murdered one of Mussolini's chief Socialist critics, Giacomo Matteotti].



The Fascists Consolidate Power (1925-1931)

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- A vertical image of a Fascist torch, also known as a 'fascio'. It features a bundle of wooden rods tied together with a dark, spiraling band. A silver-colored metal cap is visible at the top of the bundle.
- New laws passed to create the legal basis for Italy's official transformation into a single-party state:
 - Independent political parties & trade unions were abolished.
 - Freedom of the press was curbed.
 - Special courts created to persecute any political opposition.
 - National police force created [with a secret police component].

State “Corporatism”

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- 1926 → The National Council of Corporations created.
 - Guilds of employers and employees established to manage the 22 sectors of the economy.
 - Supported by small capitalists, low-level bureaucrats, and the middle class
 - They all felt threatened by the rise of Socialist power!
 - The goal → harmonize the interests of workers, managers and the state by abolishing class warfare.
 - The reality → This system retarded technological progress and destroyed workers' rights.

The Lateran Accords (1929)

🇮🇹 This settled a long-running dispute over the Catholic Church's role in Italian politics → this was the 1st time in Italian history that the Church and the government agreed on their respective roles!

🇮🇹 Terms:

- The Papacy was granted temporal sovereignty over Vatican City.
- The Papacy was guaranteed the free exercise of Roman Catholicism as the sole state religion throughout Italy.
- The Papacy accepted Italian sovereignty over the former Papal States.



The Lateran Treaty



Italian Fascist Propaganda



The Fascist Family



The Fascists encouraged the development of large families.

Education

- The first sentence pronounced by children at school was Let us salute the flag in the Roman fashion; *hail to Italy; hail to Mussolini.*
- Textbooks emphasized:
 - The glorious past of the ancient Romans.
 - The limitations imposed upon the present inhabitants by geography and the West.
 - The imperial destiny that awaited Italy's future development.



Emphasis on Physical Fitness



Anti-Semitism

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- 50,000 Jews lived in Italy in the 1930s.
 - Mussolini did NOT implement an extermination program in Italy.
 - 75% of Italian Jews survived World War II.
 - 8,000 died in German extermination camps.
 - 1938 → anti-Semitic laws passed
 - *Manifesto degli Scienziati Razzisti* [*The Manifesto of the Racist Scientists*].
 - Excluded foreign Jews [most of them were sent to German death camps].
 - Forbade all Jews from teaching.
 - Excluded Jews from serving in the government or in the military.

Gli Ebrei in Italia (1937)

- Provided the intellectual premise for the 1938 racial laws.
- Attacked Jews for:
 - Their alleged Zionist sympathies.
 - Their championing of degenerate *avante-garde* cultural expressions.
 - For their doubtful loyalty to the Fascist regime and its imperial claims.



Mussolini Was Hitler's Role Model

